EARL OF ELGIN'S

PURSUITS IN

GREECE.

MEMORANDUM

ON THE SUBJECT OF

THE EARL OF ELGIN'S PURSUITS

IN

Greece.

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MEMORANDUM, &c.

In the year 1799, when Lord Elgin was appointed his Majesty's Ambassador Extraordinary to the Ottoman Porte, he happened to be in habits of frequent intercourse with Mr. Harrison, an architect of great eminence in the west of England, who had there given various very

splendid proofs of his professional talents, especially in a public building of Grecian architecture at Chester. Mr. Harrison had besides studied many years, and to great purpose, at Rome. Lord Elgin consulted him, therefore, on the benefits that might possibly be derived to the arts in this country, in case an opportunity could be found for studying minutely the architecture and sculpture of ancient Greece; and his opinion very decidedly was, that although we might possess exact measurements of the buildings at Athens, yet a young artist could never form to himself an adequate conception of their minute details, combinations, and general effect, without having before him some such sensible representation of them as might be conveyed by *casts*. This advice, which laid the groundwork of Lord Elgin's pursuits in Greece, led to the further consideration, that, since any knowledge which was possessed of these buildings

had been obtained under the peculiar disadvantages which the prejudices and jealousies of the Turks had ever thrown in the way of such attempts, any favourable circumstances which Lord Elgin's embassy might offer should be improved fundamentally; and not only modellers, but architects and draftsmen, might be employed, to rescue from oblivion, with the most accurate detail, whatever specimens of architecture and sculpture in Greece had still escaped the ravages of time, and the barbarism of conquerors.

On this suggestion, Lord Elgin proposed to his Majesty's Government, that they should send out English artists of known eminence, capable of collecting this information in the most perfect manner; but the prospect appeared of too doubtful an issue for ministers to engage in the expense attending it. Lord Elgin then endeavoured to engage some of these artists at his own charge; but the value

of their time was far beyond his means. When, however, he reached Sicily, on the recommendation of Sir William Hamilton, he was so fortunate as to prevail on Don Tita Lusieri, one of the best general painters in Europe, of great knowledge in the arts, infinite taste, and most scrupulously exact in copying any subject he is to represent, to undertake the execution of this plan; and Mr. Hamilton, who was then accompanying Lord Elgin to Constantinople, immediately went with M. Lusieri to Rome; where, in consequence of the late revolutions in Italy, they were enabled to engage two of the most eminent *formatori* to make the *madreformi* for the casts: Signior Balestra, the first architect there, along with Ittar, a young man of great talent, to undertake the architectural part of the plan; and one Theodore, a Calmouk, who had distinguished himself during several years at Rome, in the capacity of figure painter.

After much difficulty, Lord Elgin obtained permission from the Turkish Government to establish these six artists at Athens; where they prosecuted the business of their several departments during three years, acting on one general system, with the advantage of mutual control, and under the general superintendance of M. Lusieri. They at length completed Lord Elgin's plan in all its parts.

Accordingly, every monument, of which there are any remains in Athens, has been thus most carefully and minutely measured; and, from the rough draughts of the architects, (all of which are preserved,) finished drawings have been made of the plans, elevations, and details of the most remarkable objects; in which the Calmouk has restored and inserted all the sculpture, with exquisite taste and ability. He has besides drawn, with astonishing accuracy, all the bas-reliefs on the several temples, in the precise state of decay

and mutilation in which they at present exist.

Most of the *bas*-reliefs, and nearly all the characteristic features of architecture, in the various monuments at Athens, have been moulded, and the moulds of them have been brought to London.

Besides the architecture and sculpture at Athens, all remains of them which could be traced through several other parts of Greece, have been measured and delineated, with the most scrupulous exactness, by the second architect, Ittar.

And picturesque views of Athens, of Constantinople, of various parts of Greece, and of the Islands of the Archipelago, have been executed by Don Tita Lusieri.

In the prosecution of this undertaking, the artists had the mortification of witnessing the very wilful devastation, to which all the sculpture, and even the architecture, were daily exposed, on the part of the Turks and travellers. The

Ionic Temple, on the Ilyssus, which, in Stuart's time, (about the year 1759,) was in tolerable preservation, had so completely disappeared, that its foundation can no longer be ascertained. Another temple, near Olympia, had shared a similar fate, within the recollection of man. The Temple of Minerva had been converted into a powder magazine, and been completely destroyed, from a shell falling upon it, during the bombardment of Athens by the Venetians towards the end of the seventeenth century; and even this accident had not deterred the Turks from applying the beautiful Temple of Neptune and Erectheus to the same use, whereby it is constantly exposed to a similar fate. Many of the statues on the *posticum* of the Temple of Minerva, (Parthenon,) which had been thrown down by the explosion, had been absolutely pounded for mortar, because they furnished the whitest marble within reach;

and the parts of the modern fortification, and the miserable houses where this mortar was so applied, were discovered. Besides, it is well known that the Turks will frequently climb up the ruined walls, and amuse themselves in defacing any sculpture they can reach; or in breaking columns, statues, or other remains of antiquity, in the fond expectation of finding within them some hidden treasures.

Under these circumstances, Lord Elgin felt himself impelled, by a stronger motive than personal gratification, to endeavour to preserve any specimens of sculpture, he could, without injury, rescue from such impending ruin. He had, besides, another inducement, and an example before him, in the conduct of the last French embassy sent to Turkey before the Revolution. French artists did then remove several of the sculptured ornaments from several edifices in the Acropolis, and particularly from the Parthenon. In lower-

ing one of the metopes, the tackle failed, and it was dashed to pieces; but other objects from the same temple were conveyed to France, where they are held in the very highest estimation, and some of them occupy conspicuous places in the gallery of the Louvre.* And the same agents were remaining at Athens during Lord Elgin's embassy, waiting only the return of French influence at the Porte to renew their operations. Actuated by these inducements, Lord Elgin made use of all his means, and ultimately with such success, that he has brought to England, from the ruined temples at Athens, from the modern walls and fortifications, in which many fragments had been used as

* *Vide* Dictionnaire des Beaux Arts, par A. L. Millin, 1806, article *Parthenon;* and the Memoir, on the subject of a fragment of the frize of that temple, brought by M. De Choiseuil Gouffier from Athens, and constituted national property during the French Revolution. The Memoir is published in M. Millin's *Monumens Antiques inedits.*

so many blocks of stone, and from excavations made on purpose, a greater quantity of original Athenian sculpture, in statues, alti and bassi relievi, capitals, cornices, frizes, and columns, than exists in any other part of Europe.

Lord Elgin is in possession of several of the original metopes from the Temple of Minerva. These represent the battles between the Centaurs and Lapithæ, at the nuptials of Pirithous. Each metope contains two figures, grouped in various attitudes; sometimes the Lapithæ victorious, sometimes the Centaurs. The figure of one of the Lapithæ, who is lying dead and trampled on by a Centaur, is one of the finest productions of the art; as well as the groupe adjoining to it, of Hippodamia, the bride, carried off by the Centaur Eurytion; the furious style of whose galloping, in order to secure his prize, and his shrinking from the spear that has been hurled after him, are expressed with pro-

digious animation. They are all in such high relief, as to seem groupes of statues; and they are in general finished with as much attention behind as before. They were originally continued round the entablature of the Parthenon, and formed ninety-two groupes. The zeal of the early Christians, the barbarism of the Turks, and the explosions which took place when the temple was used as a gun-powder magazine, have demolished a very large portion of them; so that, with the exception of those preserved by Lord Elgin, it is in general difficult to trace even the outline of the original subject.

The frize, which was carried along the top of the walls of the cell, offered a continuation of sculptures in low relief, and of the most interesting kind. This frize being unbroken by triglyphs, had presented much more unity of subject than the detached and insulated groupes on the metopes of the peristyle. It repre-

sented the whole of the solemn procession to the Temple of Minerva during the Panathenaic festival: many of the figures are on horseback; others are about to mount: some are in chariots; others on foot: oxen, and other victims, are leading to sacrifice: the nymphs called Canephoræ, Skiophoræ, &c. are carrying the sacred offerings in baskets and vases; priests, magistrates, warriors, &c. &c. forming altogether a series of most interesting figures, in great variety of costume, armour, and attitude. Some antiquaries, who have examined this frize with minute attention, seem to think it contained portraits of many of the leading characters at Athens, during the Peloponnesian war, particularly of Pericles, Phidias, Socrates, Alcibiades, &c. The whole frize, which originally was six hundred feet in length, is, like the temple itself, of Pentelic marble, from the quarries in the neighbourhood of Athens.

The tympanum over each of the porticoes of the Parthenon, was adorned with statues. That over the grand entrance of the temple from the west, contained the mythological history of Minerva's birth from the brain of Jove. In the centre of the groupe was seated Jupiter, in all the majesty of the sovereign of the Gods. On his left, were the principal divinities of Olympus; among whom Vulcan came prominently forward, with the axe in his hand which had cleft a passage for the goddess. On the right was Victory, in loose floating robes, holding the horses of the chariot which introduced the new divinity to Olympus. One of the bombs fired by Morosini, the Venetian, from the opposite hill of the Museum, injured many of the figures in this tympanum; and the attempt of General Kœnigsmark, in 1687, to take down the figure of Minerva, ruined the whole. By purchasing the house of one of the Turk-

ish janizaries, built immediately under and against the columns of the portico, and by demolishing it in order to excavate, Lord Elgin has had the satisfaction of recovering the greatest part of the statue of Victory, in a drapery which discovers the fine form of the figure, with exquisite delicacy and taste. Lord Elgin also found there the torsi of Jupiter and Vulcan, the breast of the Minerva, together with other fragments.

On the opposite tympanum had been represented the contest between Minerva and Neptune for the honour of giving a name to the city. One or two of the figures remained on this tympanum, and others were on the top of the wall, thrown back by the explosion which destroyed the temple; but the far greater part had fallen: and a house being built immediately below the space they had occupied, Lord Elgin, encouraged by the success of his former excavations, obtained

leave, after much difficulty, to pull down this house also, and continue his researches. But no fragments were here discovered; and the Turk, who had been induced, though most reluctantly, to give up his house to be demolished, then exultingly pointed out the places in the modern fortification, and in his own buildings, where the cement employed had been formed from the very statues which Lord Elgin had been in hopes of finding. And it was afterwards ascertained, on incontrovertible evidence, that these statues had been reduced to powder, and so used. Then, and then only, did Lord Elgin employ means to rescue what still remained from a similar fate. Among these objects is a horse's head, which far surpasses any thing of the kind, both in the truth and spirit of the execution. The nostrils are distended, the ears erect; the veins swollen, one might almost say throbbing: his mouth is open, and he seems to

neigh with the conscious pride of belonging to the Ruler of the Waves. Besides this inimitable head, Lord Elgin has procured, from the same pediment, two colossal groupes, each consisting of two female figures. They are formed of single massive blocks of Pentelic marble: their attitudes are most graceful; and the lightness and elegance of the drapery exquisite. From the same pediment has also been procured, a male statue, in a reclining posture, supposed to represent Neptune. And, above all, the figure denominated the Theseus, which is universally admitted to be superior to any piece of statuary ever brought into England. Each of these statues is worked with such care, and the finishing even carried so far, that every part, and the very plinth itself in which they rest, are equally polished on every side.

From the Opisthodomos of the Parthenon, Lord Elgin also procured some va-

luable inscriptions, written in the manner called Kionedon or Columnar, next in antiquity to the Boustrophedon. The greatest care is taken to preserve an equal number of letters in each line; even monosyllables are separated occasionally into two parts, if the line has had its complement, and the next line then begins with the end of the broken word. The letters range perpendicularly, as well as horizontally, so as to render it almost impossible to make any interpolation or erasure of the original text. The subjects of these monuments are public decrees of the people; accounts of the riches contained in the treasury, and delivered by the administrators to their successors in office; enumerations of the statues; the silver, gold, and precious stones, deposited in the temples; estimates for the public works, &c.

The Parthenon itself, independently of its decorative sculpture, is so chaste and

perfect a model of Doric architecture, that Lord Elgin conceived it to be of the highest importance to the arts, to secure original specimens of each member of that edifice. These consist of a capital; assizes of the columns themselves, to show the exact form of the curve used in channelling; a Triglyph, and motules from the cornice, and even some of the marble tiles with which the ambulatory was roofed: so that, not only the sculptor may be gratified by studying every specimen of his art, from the colossal statue to the basso-relievo, executed in the golden age of Pericles, by Phidias himself, or under his immediate direction; but the practical architect may examine into every detail of the building, even to the mode of uniting the tambours of the columns, without the aid of mortar, so as to give to the shafts the appearance of single blocks.

Equal attention has been paid to the Temple of Theseus; but as the walls, and

columns, and sculpture of this monument, are in their original position, no part of the sculpture has been displaced, nor the minutest fragment of any kind separated from the building. The metopes in mezzo-relievo, containing a mixture of the labours of Hercules and Theseus, have been modelled and drawn, as well as the frize representing the battle between the Centaurs and Lapithæ, some incidents of the battle of Marathon, and some mythological subjects. The temple itself is very inferior in size and decorative sculpture to the Parthenon; having been built by Cimon, the son of Miltiades, before Pericles had given to his countrymen a taste for such magnificence and expense, as he displayed on the edifices of the Acropolis.

The original approach to the Acropolis, from the plain of Athens, was by a long flight of steps, commencing near the foot of the Areopagus, and terminating at the Propylæa. The Propylæa was a hexa-

style colonnade, with two wings, and surmounted by a pediment. Whether the metopes and tympanum were adorned with sculpture, cannot now be ascertained; as the pediment and entablature have been destroyed, and the intercolumniations built up with rubbish, in order to raise a battery of cannon on the top. Although the plan of this edifice contain some deviations from the pure taste that reigns in the other structures of the Acropolis, yet each member is so perfect in the details of its execution, that Lord Elgin was at great pains to obtain a Doric and an Ionic capital from its ruins. On the right hand of the Propylæa, was a temple dedicated to Victory without wings; an epithet to which many explanations have been given. This temple was built from the sale of the spoils won in the glorious struggles for freedom at Marathon, Salamis, and Platæa. On its frize were sculptured many incidents of

these memorable battles; in a style that has been thought by no means inferior to the metopes of the Parthenon. The only fragments of it that had escaped the ravages of barbarians, were built into the wall of a gunpowder magazine near it, and the finest block was inserted upside downwards. It required the whole of Lord Elgin's influence at the Porte, very great sacrifices, and much perseverance, to remove them; but he at length succeeded. They represent the Athenians in close combat with the Persians, and the sculptor has marked the different dresses and armour of the various forces serving under the great king. The long garments and zones of the Persians, had induced former travellers, from the hasty and imperfect view they had of them, to suppose the subject was the battle between Theseus and the Amazons, who invaded Attica, under the command of Antiope; but the Persian tiaras, the

Phrygian bonnets, and many other particulars, prove them to be mistaken. The spirit with which the groupes of combatants are pourtrayed, is wonderful;—one remarks, in particular, the contest of four warriors to rescue the dead body of one of their comrades, which is expressed with uncommon animation. These basreliefs, and some of the most valuable sculpture, especially the representation of a marriage, taken from the parapet of the modern fortification, were embarked in the Mentor, a vessel belonging to Lord Elgin, which was unfortunately wrecked off the island of Cerigo: but Mr. Hamilton, who was at the time on board, and most providentially saved, immediately directed his whole energies to discover some means of rescuing so valuable a cargo; and, in the course of several months devoted to that endeavour, he succeeded in procuring some very expert divers from the islands of Syme

and Calymno, near Rhodes; who were able, with immense labour and perseverance, to extricate a few of the cases from the hold of the ship, while she lay in twelve fathoms water. It was impossible to recover the remainder, before the storms of two winters had effectually destroyed the timbers of the vessel.

Near the Parthenon are three temples, so connected by their structure, and by the rites which were celebrated in them, that they might be almost considered as a triple temple. They are of small dimensions, and of the Ionic order: one of them dedicated to Neptune and Erectheus; the second to Minerva Polias, the protectress of citadels; the third to the nymph Pandrosos. It was on the spot where these temples stand, that Minerva and Neptune were said to have contended for the honour of naming the city. Athenian superstition long showed the mark of Neptune's trident, and a briny fountain, which

attested his having there opened a passage for his horse; and the original olive tree produced by Minerva was venerated in the temple of Pandrosos, as late as the time of the Antonines.

This temple of Minerva Polias is of the most delicate and elegant proportions of the Ionic order: the capitals and bases of the columns are ornamented with consummate taste; and the sculpture of the frize and cornice is exquisitely rich. It is difficult to conceive how marble has been wrought to such a depth, and brought to so sharp an edge: the palmetti, ovetti, &c. have all the delicacy of works in metal. The vestibule of the temple of Neptune, is of more masculine proportions; but its Ionic capitals have great merit. This beautiful vestibule is now used as a powder magazine; and no other access to it could be had but by creeping through an opening in a wall which had been recently built be-

tween the columns. Lord Elgin was enabled to keep it open during his operations within; but it was then closed, so that future travellers will be prevented from seeing the inner door of the temple, which is, perhaps, the most perfect specimen in existence of Ionic architecture. Both these temples have been measured; and their plans, elevations, and views, made with the utmost accuracy. All the ornaments have been moulded; some original blocks of the frize and cornice have been obtained from the ruins, as well as a capital and a base.

The little adjoining chapel of Pandrosos is a most singular specimen of Athenian architecture: instead of Ionic columns to support the architrave, it had seven statues of Caryan women, or Caryatides. The Athenians endeavoured, by this device, to perpetuate the infamy of the inhabitants of Carya, who were the only Peloponnesians who sided with Xerxes in

his invasion of Greece. The men had been reduced to the deplorable state of Helotes; and the women not only condemned to the most servile employments, but those of rank and family forced, in this abject condition, to wear their ancient dresses and ornaments. In this state they are here exhibited. The drapery is fine, the hair of each figure is braided in a different manner, and a kind of diadem they wear on their head forms the capital. Besides drawings and mouldings of all these particulars, Lord Elgin has brought to England one of the original statues. The Lacedæmonians had used a species of vengeance similar to that above mentioned in constructing the Persian Portico, which they had erected at Sparta, in honour of their victory over the forces of Mardonius at Platæa: placing statues of Persians in their rich oriental dresses, instead of columns, to support the entablature.

The architects have also made a ground plan of the Acropolis, in which they have not only inserted all the existing monuments, but have likewise added those, the position of which could be ascertained from traces of their foundations. Among these are the Temple and Cave of Pan; to whom the Athenians thought themselves so much indebted for the success of the battle of Marathon, as to vow him a temple. All traces of it are now nearly obliterated; as well as of that of Aglauros, who devoted herself to death to save her country. Here the young citizens of Athens received their first armour, enrolled their names, and swore to fight to the last for the liberties of their country. Near this spot the Persians scaled the wall of the citadel, when Themistocles had retired with the remains of the army, and the whole Athenian navy, to Salamis. The remains of the original walls may still be traced in the midst of the Turkish and

Venetian additions, and they are distinguishable by three modes of construction at very remarkable epochs,—the Pelasgic, the Cecropian, and that of the age of Cimon and Pericles. It was at this last brilliant period, that the Acropolis, in its whole extent, was contemplated with the same veneration as a consecrated temple; consistent with which sublime conception, the Athenians crowned its lofty walls with an entablature of grand proportions, surmounted by a cornice. Some of the massy triglyphs and motules still remain in their original position, and produce a most imposing effect.

The ancient walls of the city of Athens, as they existed in the Peloponnesian war, have been traced by Lord Elgin's artists in their whole extent, as well as the long walls that led to the Munychia and the Piræus. The gates, mentioned in ancient authors, have been ascertained: and every public monument, that could be recog-

nised, has been inserted in a general map; as well as detailed plans given of each. Extensive excavations were necessary for this purpose, particularly at the Great Theatre of Bacchus; at the Pnyx, where the assemblies of the people were held, where Pericles, Alcibiades, Demosthenes, and Æschines, delivered their orations, and at the theatre built by Herodes Atticus, to the memory of his wife Regilla. The supposed Tumuli of Antiope, Euripides, and others, have also been opened; and from these excavations, and various others in the environs of Athens, has been procured a complete and valuable collection of Greek vases. The colonies sent from Athens, Corinth, &c. into Magna Græcia, Sicily, and Etruria, carried with them this art of making vases, from their mother country; and, as the earliest modern collections of vases were made in those colonies, they have improperly acquired the name of Etruscan. Those

found by Lord Elgin at Athens, Æginæ, Argos, and Corinth, will prove the indubitable claim of the Greeks to the invention and perfection of this art: Few of those in the collections of the King of Naples at Portici, or in that of Sir William Hamilton, excel some which Lord Elgin has procured, with respect to the elegance of the form, the fineness of the materials, the delicacy of the execution, or the beauty of the subjects delineated on them; and they are, for the most part, in very high preservation. A tumulus, into which an excavation was commenced under Lord Elgin's eye during his residence at Athens, has furnished a most valuable treasure of this kind. It consists of a large marble vase, five feet in circumference, enclosing one of bronze thirteen inches in diameter, of beautiful sculpture, in which was a deposit of burnt bones, and a lachrymatory of alabaster, of exquisite form; and on the bones lay

a wreath of myrtle in gold, having, besides leaves, both buds and flowers. This tumulus is situated on the road which leads from Port Piræus to the Salaminian Ferry and Eleusis. May it not be the tomb of Aspasia?

From the Theatre of Bacchus, Lord Elgin has obtained the very ancient sundial, which existed there during the time of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides; and a large statue of the Indian, or bearded Bacchus,* dedicated by Thrasyllus in gratitude for his having obtained the prize of tragedy at the Panathenaic festival. A beautiful little Corinthian temple near it, raised for a similar prize gained by Lysicrates, and commonly called the Lantern of Demosthenes, has also been drawn and modelled with minute attention. It is one of the most

* This statue is represented by Stuart with a female's head, and was called by him the personification of the Demos of Athens.

exquisite productions of Greek architecture. The elevation, ground-plan, and other details of the octagonal temple, raised by Andronicus Cyrrhestes to the winds, have also been executed with care; but the sculpture on its frize is in so heavy a style, that it was not judged worthy of being modelled in plaster.

Permission was obtained from the archbishop of Athens, to examine the interior of all the churches and convents in Athens and its neighbourhood, in search of antiquities; and his authority was frequently employed, to permit Lord Elgin to carry away several curious fragments of antiquity. This search furnished many valuable bas-reliefs, inscriptions, ancient dials, a Gymnasiarch's chair in marble, on the back of which are figures of Harmodius and Aristogiton, with daggers in their hands, and the death of Leæna, who bit out her tongue during the torture, rather than confess what she knew of the

conspiracy against the Pisistratidæ. The fountain in the court-yard of the English consul Logotheti's house was decorated with a bas-relief of Bacchantes, in the style called Græco-Etruscan: Lord Elgin obtained this, as well as a *quadriga* in bas-relief, with a Victory hovering over the charioteer, probably an *ex voto*, for some victory at the Olympic games. Amongst the Funeral Cippi found in different places, are some remarkable names, particularly that of Socrates; and in the Ceramicus itself, Lord Elgin discovered an inscription in elegiac verse, on the Athenians who fell at Potidæa, and whose eulogy was delivered with pathetic eloquence in the funeral oration of Pericles.

The peasants at Athens generally put into a niche over the door of their cottages, any fragment they discover, in ploughing the fields. Out of these, were selected and purchased many curious an-

tique votive tablets, with sculpture and inscriptions. A complete series has also been formed of capitals, of the only three orders known in Greece, the Doric, the Ionic, and the Corinthian; from the earliest dawn of art in Athens, to its zenith under Pericles; and, from thence, through all its degradations, to the dark ages of the lower empire.

At a convent called Daphne, about half way between Athens and Eleusis, were the remains of an Ionic temple of Venus, equally remarkable for the brilliancy of the marble, the bold style of the ornaments, the delicacy with which they are finished, and their high preservation. Lord Elgin procured from thence two of the capitals, a whole fluted column, and a base.

Lord Elgin was indebted chiefly to the friendship of the Captain Pacha, for the good fortune of procuring, while at the Dardanelles, in his way to Constanti-

nople, the celebrated Boustrophedon inscription, from the promontory of Sigæum, a monument which several ambassadors from Christian Powers to the Porte, and even Louis XIV. in the height of his power, had ineffectually endeavoured to obtain. Lord Elgin found it forming a seat or couch at the door of a Greek chapel, and habitually resorted to by persons afflicted with ague; who, deriving great relief from remaining reclined upon it, attributed their recovery to the marble, and not to the elevated situation and sea air, of which it procured them the advantage. This ill-fated superstition had already obliterated more than one half of the inscription, and in a few years more it would have become perfectly illegible.

By the aid of this valuable acquisition, Lord Elgin's collection of inscriptions comprehends specimens of every remarkable peculiarity in the variations of the

Greek alphabet, throughout the most interesting period of Grecian history.

A few bronzes, cameos, and intaglios, were also procured: in particular, a cameo of very exquisite beauty, in perfect preservation, and of a peculiarly fine stone: it represents a female centaur suckling a young one Lord Elgin was equally fortunate in forming a collection of Greek medals, among which are several that are very rare; others of much historical merit; and many most admirable specimens of art.

The late Dr. Carlyle, Professor of Arabic at Cambridge, had accompanied Lord Elgin to Turkey, in the hopes of discovering any hidden treasures of Grecian or Arabic literature. Accordingly, Lord Elgin obtained for him access to some deposits of MSS. in the Seraglio: and, in company with another gentleman of the embassy, amply qualified also for the research, he examined many collections in Constantinople, and in the neighbour-

ing islands; more than thirty monasteries on Mount Athos; and various other religious establishments throughout Greece, and the islands of the Archipelago. From these, they brought home a great many MSS. which to them appeared valuable; as well as a particular catalogue and description of such as they were obliged to leave behind them.

In proportion as Lord Elgin's plan advanced, and the means accumulated in his hands towards affording an accurate knowledge of the works of architecture and sculpture in Athens and in Greece, it became a subject of anxious inquiry with him, in what way the greatest degree of benefit could be derived to the arts from what he had been so fortunate as to procure.

In regard to the works of the architects employed by him, he had naturally, from the beginning, looked forward to their being engraved: and accordingly all such

plans, elevations, and details, as to those persons appeared desirable for that object, were by them, and on the spot, extended with the greatest possible care, and they are now in a state of complete preparation. Besides these, all the working sketches and measurements have been preserved, and offer ample materials for further drawings, should they be required. It was then Lord Elgin's wish, both out of respect for the subjects themselves, and in a view to their future utility, that the whole of the drawings might be executed in the highest perfection of the art of engraving: and for this purpose, he conceived it not impossible, and certainly very much to be desired, that a fund should be procured by subscription, exhibition, or otherwise; by aid of which, these engravings might still be distributable, for the benefit of artists, at a rate of expense within the means of professional men.

More difficulty occurred in forming a plan, for deriving the utmost advantage from the marbles and casts. Lord Elgin's first attempt was to have the statues and bas-reliefs restored; and in that view he went to Rome, to consult and to employ Canova. The decision of that most eminent artist was conclusive. On examining the specimens produced to him, and making himself acquainted with the whole collection, and particularly with what came from the Parthenon, by means of the persons who had been carrying on Lord Elgin's operations at Athens, and who had returned with him to Rome, Canova declared, That however greatly it was to be lamented that these statues should have suffered so much from time and barbarism, yet it was undeniable, that they had never been retouched; that they were the work of the ablest artists the world had ever seen; executed under

the most enlightened patron of the arts, and at a period when genius enjoyed the most liberal encouragement, and had attained the highest degree of perfection; and that they had been found worthy of forming the decoration of the most admired edifice ever erected in Greece: That he should have had the greatest delight, and derived the greatest benefit, from the opportunity Lord Elgin offered him of having in his possession, and contemplating, these inestimable marbles: But, (his expression was,) it would be sacrilege in him, or any man, to presume to touch them with a chisel. Since their arrival in this country, they have been thrown open to the inspection of the public; and the opinions and impressions, not only of artists, but of men of taste in general, have thus been formed and collected. From these, the judgment pronounced by Canova has been univer-

sally sanctioned: and all idea of restoring the marbles has been deprecated. Meanwhile, the most distinguished painters and sculptors have assiduously attended this museum, and evinced the most enthusiastic admiration of the perfection, to which these marbles now prove to them that Phidias had brought the art of sculpture, and which had hitherto only been known through the medium of ancient authors. They have attentively examined them, and they have ascertained, that they were executed with the most scrupulous anatomical truth, not only in the human figure, but in the various animals to be found in this collection. They have been struck with the wonderful accuracy, and, at the same time, the great effect of the minutest detail; and with the life, and expression, so distinctly produced in every variety of attitude and action. Those more advanced in years, have testified the

liveliest concern, at not having had the advantage of studying these models. And many, who have had the opportunity of forming the comparison, (among these are the most eminent sculptors and painters in this metropolis,) have publicly and unequivocally declared, that, in the view of professional men, this collection must be far more valuable than any other collection in existence. It may be added, on the subject of these impressions and opinions, that one of the groups of female statues so rivetted and agitated the feelings of Mrs. Siddons, the pride of theatrical representation, as actually to draw tears from her eyes: and the President of the Royal Academy, no less eminent as an artist, than as the zealous patron and encourager of the arts in this country, after passing some months in the daily study of these marbles, and having ascertained the advantage to be

derived from them, to painting as well as to sculpture, communicated to Lord Elgin the annexed report of his operations.*

Two suggestions have, however, met with much approbation, in a view to the improvement to be obtained to sculpture, from these marbles and casts—The first, that casts of all such as were ornaments on the temples, should be placed in an elevation, and in a situation, similar to that which they actually had occupied; that the originals should be disposed, in a view to the more easy inspection and study of them; and that particular subjects should occasionally be selected, and premiums given for the restoration of them. This restoration to be executed on casts, but by no means on the originals; and in the museum itself, where the character of the sculpture might be the more readily studied.

* *Vide* Mr. West's Letter subjoined. Appendix [A].

Secondly: From trials which Lord Elgin was induced to make, at the request of professional gentlemen, a strong impression has been created, that the science of sculpture, and the taste and judgment by which it is to be carried forward and appreciated, cannot so effectually be promoted, as by athletic exercises practised in the presence of similar works; the distinguishing merit of which, is an able, scientific, ingenious, but exact imitation of Nature. By no other way could the variety of attitude, the articulation of the muscles, the description of the passions; in short, every thing a sculptor has to represent, be so accurately or so beneficially understood and represented.

Under similar advantages, and with an enlightened and encouraging protection bestowed on genius and the arts, it may not be too sanguine to indulge a hope, that, prodigal as Nature is in the perfections of the human figure in

this country, animating as are the instances of patriotism, heroic actions, and private virtues, deserving commemoration, sculpture may soon be raised in England to rival the ablest productions of the best times of Greece.

APPENDIX [A].

BENJAMIN WEST, Esq.

TO

THE EARL OF ELGIN.

London, Newman Street, Feb. 6, 1809.

MY LORD,

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's obliging letter from your residence in Scotland; and have to thank you for the indulgence you afforded me, to study, and draw from, the sculptures by Phidias,* in your Lordship's house in Piccadilly.

I have found in this collection of sculpture so much excellence in art, (which is as applicable to painting and architecture, as to sculpture,) and a variety so magnificent and boundless, that every branch of science connected with the fine arts, cannot fail to acquire something from this collection.

* Vide Appendix [B].

Your Lordship, by bringing these treasures of the first and best age of sculpture and architecture into London, has founded a new Athens for the emulation and example of the British student. Esteeming this collection as I do, my Lord, I flatter myself it will not be unacceptable for your Lordship to know, what are the studies I have made from it.

I must premise to your Lordship, that I considered loose and detached sketches from these reliques, of little use to me, or value to the arts in general. To improve myself, therefore, and to contribute to the improvement of others, I have deemed it more important to select and combine whatever was most excellent from them, into subject and composition.

From the Centaurs in *alto relievo*, I have taken the figures of most distinguished eminence, and formed them into groups for painting; from which selection, by adding female figures of my own, I have composed the Battle of the Centaurs. I have drawn the figures the size of the originals, on a canvass five feet six inches high, by ten feet long.

From the equestrian figures in *relievo*, I have formed the composition of Theseus and Hercules in triumph over the Amazons, having made their Queen Hippolita a prisoner. In continuation, and as a companion to this subject, I have formed a composition, in which Hercules bestows Hippolita in mar-

riage upon Theseus. Those two are on the same size with the Centaurs.

From the large figure of Theseus, I have drawn a figure of that hero, of the same size with the sculpture. Before him, on the ground, I have laid the dead body of the Minotaur which he slew. As, by this enterprise, he was extricated from the Labyrinth by the aid of Ariadne, I have represented that Princess sitting by his side, gazing on him with affection. In the back-ground, are the Athenian youths, whom he delivered from bondage; and near them, the ship "with black sails," (in the poetic fancy of Pindar,) which brought him to Crete. The size of this canvass is six feet high, by nine feet long.

From the figure of Neptune, I have formed a companion to the Theseus. In this composition, I have shown Neptune reclining, with his left arm upon the knees of Amphitrite, while with his right he strikes the earth with his trident, and creates the horse. Around him, is Triton, with his train of marine gods; in the back-ground, are equestrian exhibitions; and in the distance, ships at anchor.

From the casts in plaster of Paris, taken from the moulds which your Lordship had made at Athens, I selected such figures as I was enabled to form into a composition; the subject of which is, Alexander,

and his horse Bucephalus: it is on a canvass smaller than those before mentioned.

In order to render the subjects which I selected, with perspicuity, and the effect, which arises from combined parts and the order of arrangements, comprehensive, I have ventured to unite figures of my own invention with those of Phidias; but as I have endeavoured to preserve, with the best force of my abilities, the style of Phidias, I flatter myself, the union will not be deemed incongruous or presumptuous. Your Lordship may perhaps be inclined to think with me, that a point, and, if I may so express it, a kind of climax, is thus given to those works; by the union of those detached figures, with the incorporation of the parts of individual grandeur, and abstracted excellence of Phidias. For what I have done, my Lord, I had the example of Raphael, and most of the Italian masters of the greatest celebrity. Is it not, moreover, this combination of parts which comes the nearest to perfection in refined and ideal art? For, thus combining what is excellent in art with what possesses character in nature, the most distinguished works have been produced, in painting, poetry, and sculpture.

In following this system of combination, I had the singular good fortune, by your Lordship's liberality, to select from the first productions of sculp-

ture which ever adorned the world in that department in art; which neither Raphael, nor any of the distinguished masters, had the advantage to see, much less to study, since the revival of art. I may, therefore, declare with truth, my Lord, that I am the first in modern times who have enjoyed the much coveted opportunity, and availed myself of the rare advantage of forming compositions from them, by adapting their excellencies to poetic fictions and historical facts. I sincerely hope that those examples of art, with which your Lordship has enriched your country, and which has made London, if not the first, one of the most desirable points in Europe to study them—will not only afford to the British people the frequent opportunity of contemplating their excellencies; but will be the means of enlightening the public mind, and correcting the national taste, to a true estimation of what is really valuable and dignified in art. The influence of these works will, I trust, encourage the men of taste and opulence in this country, to bestow a liberal patronage on genius to pursue this dignified style in art, for the honour of genius, themselves, and the country. I need not impress on your Lordship's mind a truth, of which the experience of the progress of art, through all ages, is the best confirmation, that without such refinement in this higher department of poetic or historical subjects, England

will never acquire the glory of possessing the arts, in any but a subordinate degree. It is my wish, therefore, as it has been my endeavour, that the supreme excellence of those works of sculpture should become the means, and act as an incentive to that improvement amongst us, by which we may gratify the ambition of all honourable minds, and be remembered amongst the lovers of art and our country in a distant posterity, as those who have opened the avenues of excellence, and have rightly known and valued them. Let us, my Lord, justify ourselves, at least, by our intentions. In whatever estimation the arts of the present day shall be held by those of future ages, your Lordship must be remembered by the present, and be recorded by those to come, as a benefactor, who has conferred obligations, not only on a profession, but upon a nation; and as having rescued from the devastation of ignorance, and the unholy rapine of barbarism, those unrivalled works of genius, to be preserved in the bosom of your country, which a few centuries more might have consigned to oblivion.

To your Lordship I have to return my sincere thanks, for the means you have afforded me of adding my name to that of Phidias, by arranging his figures in my own compositions, and adapting them to subjects, by which my sketches may be

rendered more acceptable, as well as more improving to myself in the higher point of my profession. And may the materials from which those sublime sculptures have been produced, be preserved from accident, that men of taste and genius, yet unborn, may be gratified with a sight of them; and that the admiring world may revere the Author of all things, for having bestowed on man those peculiar powers of his mind and hand! With these sentiments, and with profound respect for your Lordship, I have the honour to be,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's most

Obedient and obliged,

BENJ. WEST.

To the Earl of Elgin.

Newman Street, March 20, 1811.

MY LORD,

LEARNING that your Lordship is in town, I avail myself of the opportunity to request you would do me the honour of a visit, to see the last Historical Picture I have painted.—The subject is our Saviour receiving the Blind and Sick, in the Temple, to heal them.—This Picture I am the more desirous of showing to your Lordship, as I have

conducted it on those dignified principles of refined art, which I found so superior in the Athenian sculpture, with which you have enriched your country.

In the former letter, which I had the honour of writing to your Lordship, I mentioned, that I perceived in your marbles, points of excellence as appropriate to painting as to sculpture. The points to which I alluded, are the visible signs of that internal life, with which the animal creation is endowed, for the attainment of the various purposes for which they were created. It was the representation of these emotions of life which the philosophers among the Greeks recommended to their sculptors, at a period when their figures were but little removed from Egyptian statues. And, accordingly, the influence of this advice was perceptible in the subsequent works of their artists. Who, in fact, can look on the Horse's Head in your Lordship's Collection of Athenian Sculpture, without observing the animation and expression of real life? Would one not almost suppose, that some magic power, rather than a human hand, had turned the head into stone, at the moment when the horse was in all the energies of its nature?—We feel the same, when we view the young equestrian Athenians; and, in observing them, we are insensibly carried on with the impression, that they and their horses

actually existed, as we see them, at the instant when they were converted into marble.

In the last production of my pencil, which I now invite your Lordship to see, it has been my ambition, (though at a very advanced period of life,) to introduce those refinements in art, which are so distinguished in your Collection. And if I have achieved this, the obligation is to your Lordship, for bringing those marbles to London, and giving me the opportunity of studying them. Had I been blessed with seeing and studying these emanations of genius at an earlier period of life, the sentiment of their pre-eminence would have animated all my exertions; and more character, and expression, and life, would have pervaded all my humble attempts in Historical Painting. Let us suppose a young man at this time in London endowed with powers such as enabled Michael Angelo to advance the arts, as he did, by the aid of one mutilated specimen of Grecian excellence in sculpture; to what an eminence might not such a genius carry art, by the opportunity of studying those sculptures in the aggregate, which adorned the Temple of Minerva at Athens? It is therefore my devout wish, that they should rest in the Capital of this Empire: and that their resting-place should be as accessible as possible to public inspection, in order to impart, generally, a true notion of what is classical in art. Such a deposit would not only be of infinite ad-

vantage to young artists, by rendering them familiar with such excellence; but it would be the means of diffusing a correct knowledge of art, whereby real merit in it might be appreciated, and judiciously rewarded.

In painting, sculpture, and architecture, it is the same as in letters. Without the opportunity of knowing what is classical in art, neither of these branches can be refined by their professors, nor adequately encouraged by their patrons.

You may be assured, my Lord, that unless England establishes the means of cultivating the exalted class of art within herself, she will never be entitled to participate with Greece and Rome in the honour they acquired in the fine arts. Yet I know no people, since the Greeks, so capable, as the inhabitants of this island, of emulating them in art, if rightly directed and patronised—For the British are a scientific and reasoning people in all matters which they undertake to investigate: and I hope the time is not far distant, when a right direction in the fine arts will not only be attained, but consolidated on true and permanent principles.

With profound respect I have the honour to be,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's

Most obedient servant,

BENJ. WEST.

To the Right Hon. the Earl of Elgin.

APPENDIX [B].

NOTES

ON

PHIDIAS AND HIS SCHOOL:

COLLECTED FROM ANCIENT AUTHORS.

PHIDIAS, the son of Charmidas, was born about 500 years before Christ. He was originally a painter,* and he carried the arts of painting and sculpture to a greater perfection than they had ever before attained. His brother, Panænus, also painted the celebrated Marathon in the Pœcile.† In the art of making statues of bronze, both for the number and excellence of his works, Phidias was without a rival. His Amazon,‡ but especially his Lemnian Minerva,‖ were for many ages the admiration of the

* Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. xxxv. c. 34.

† Pausan. lib. i. Eliac. p. 402. Kuhnii.

‡ Plin. xxxiv. c. 5.

‖ Pausan. in Att. p. 67. ed. Kuhn. Plin. xxxiv. c. 8.

world for their faultless symmetry. In works of ivory also, Phidias stands alone.* The enthusiasm with which Cicero,† Strabo,‡ Pliny,‖ and Pausanias,§ speak of his colossal statues of Jupiter and Minerva, which he executed in ivory and gold, can best be learned by consulting those writers: but there is reason to believe that Phidias himself did not approve of the application of this material to works of art; at least not to works of that size, however it may have suited the capricious taste of the Athenian people.¶ In an assembly of the people, he is said to have earnestly recommended a different substance for the statue of Minerva, which was to be placed in her temple in the Acropolis: but on the Athenians being informed that it would be cheaper than ivory, they rejected the proposal.

Besides these two colossal statues in ivory and gold, we do not hear of above one or two more executed in these materials by the same artist. The far greater number of his statues, which are expressly mentioned by the ancient writers, are in bronze.

Phidias, however, did not disdain efforts of an humbler sort: for, not to dwell on his statues in

* Quintil. lib. xii. c. 10.
† Passim in Philos.
‡ Lib. viii. p. 253. Casaub.
‖ Lib. xxxvi. c. 5.
§ In Eliac. p. 306. ed. Xyland.
¶ Val. Max. lib. i. 11.

wood,* plaster, and clay,† nor on certain pieces of minute mechanism, as fish and flies,‡ ascribed to the same master; he was the first who discovered the true principles of carving in relievo;‖ and, in the smallest productions of his art, he preserved, according to Pliny, the same grandeur of execution, which characterized his greatest works. The same author mentions, in terms of high praise, the Lapithæ and Centaurs, carved on the sandals of Minerva, and the workmanship of her shield; on the convex side of which, was represented the battle of the Amazons, and on the concave, that of the Gods and Giants. The shield, moreover, contained a likeness of Pericles, fighting with an Amazon,§ and was put together so artfully, that if a figure of Phidias himself (representing him as an old bald man, holding up a large stone in his hands, to denote his being the architect of the temple) were by any means removed, the whole shield must inevitably have fallen to pieces.¶

The masters of the greatest eminence which the School of Phidias produced, were, Agoracritus, Alcamenes, and Colotes. Of these, Alcamenes was the most distinguished: he is mentioned by the

* Pausan. in Bæot. p. 718. ed. Kuhnii.

† Ibid. in Att. 97. ‡ Acad. des Ins. Gedoyn, (v. ix.)

‖ Plin. xxxiv. c. 8. § Plut. in Pericle.

¶ Plut. in Pericle. Cic. Tusc. lib. i. c. 15. et Orat. c. 71.

ancients, as an artist of the greatest merit. We praise, says Cicero, that Vulcan at Athens, which Alcamenes made; in which, though standing, and covered over with drapery, there is an appearance of lameness without deformity.* Valerius Maximus gives a similar description of it at greater length.† Pausanias makes mention of a beautiful Bacchus ‡ from the hands of this master, in ivory and gold; and two colossal statues of Minerva and Hercules, erected at Thebes, of Pentelic marble. ‖

But the master-piece of Alcamenes was the group of statues on the pediment of the back front of the Temple of Jupiter § at Olympia: the description of which, in the Eliacs of Pausanias, affords so many singular coincidences with the statues upon the pediments of the Parthenon at Athens, that it is scarcely possible to entertain a doubt that both were erected nearly at the same period. It is not improbable that Alcamenes had attempted to imitate the latter, encouraged by the success of his master Phidias in a similar undertaking.

Of the same Alcamenes, we read in Pliny that he was a statuary of the highest merit, that many of his works still adorned the temples, and that he had

* De Nat. Deor. lib. i. c. 30. † Lib. viii. c. 9.

‡ Paus. in Att. p. 46. ed. Kuhnii.

‖ Id. in Bæot. p. 733. ed. Kuhn. § Id. in Eliac. lib. i. p. 397.

produced the incomparable Venus without the walls, called the ἀφροδίτη ἔν κήποις.*

Another of Phidias' scholars—his favourite pupil Agoracritus, is chiefly celebrated, as connected with the famous statue of Nemesis, the Goddess of Vengeance, at Rhamnus near Marathon, in memory of the result of that battle. The history of this statue, and its allegorical accessories, one of the departments of the art peculiar to Phidias, are too well known, to be repeated here. To this statue was appended a label, stating that it was the work of Agoracritus: but all the ancient writers who mention it, and particularly Pausanias, speak of it as the work of Phidias—and it appears to have been one of the most extraordinary productions in marble sculpture which the art has ever produced.†

Of the other marble statues attributed to Phidias, were:

1. The Mercury Pronaos in the Temple of Ismenian Apollo at Thebes.‡

2. A beautiful Venus in the Octavian Museum at Rome.‖

3. The face, hands, and feet, of the Minerva Bellica of the Platæans, from the spoils at Marathon.§ The rest of the statue was of wood and gold.

* Plin. lib. xxxvi. c. 4.

† Pausanias, Pliny, &c.

‡ Paus. in Bæot. p. 357. ed. Xyland.

‖ Plin. xxxvi. 4.

§ Paus. in Bæot. p. 718. Kuhnii ed.

4. The Venus Urania, in Parian marble, in the temple of that Goddess in Attica.

5. One of the colossal statues on the Esquiline Hill—The inscription is of later date; and therefore, exclusive of the merit of the sculpture, carries with it no other testimony than that of the notoriety of Phidias as a sculptor in marble.*

In the Augustan age, and in that immediately subsequent to it, it was generally believed, not only that Phidias frequently caused the names of his pupils to be inscribed on his own statues, but that he had given instances of the greatest skill in finishing the works of other artists. Amongst these last was the above-mentioned statue of Aprodite ἔν κηποις by Alcamenes. To this extraordinary talent, which we must suppose was chiefly exercised in works in marble, Cicero alludes in the 4th book de Fin For. et Mal. "Ut Phidias potest a principio instituere "signum, idque perficere: potest ab alio inchoatum "accipere, et absolvere."

With respect to the particular character of the sculpture of Phidias, we may gather from the language of the ancients respecting him, that he had

* The same inference may be drawn from the following passage in Aristotle. Eudem. lib. v. c. 7.—Την δε σοφίαν ἐν ταὶς τεχναις τοὶς ἀκριβεστάτοις τὰς τεχνας ἀπο δίδομεν ὅιον Φσίδιαν λιθουργον σόφον, καὶ πολύκλειτον ἀνδριαντοποίον.

no competitor, at least for posthumous fame. That his excellence in his own art became a proverbial term, of comparison by which to illustrate that of all other persons whatsoever in their particular departments.

As an elegant modern French writer has observed,* " The sculptors who preceded Phidias could not divest their statues of a certain stiff and dry formality. Phidias was the first who gave to his style, according to the expressions of the ancients, grandeur, majesty, gravity, breadth, and magnificence."

Dionysius Halicarnassensis, in his essay on the oratory of Isocrates, compares it, in the following terms, with the sculpture of Phidias:

Θαυμασῖὸν γὰῤ δὴ και μέγα το της Ισοκράῖους κατασκευῆς ὕψος, ἠρωϊκῆς μάλλον ἢ ἀνθρωπίνης φύσεως ὀικεῖον. δοκεῖ δὲ μοι μὴ ἄπο σκοπω τὶς ἄν ἐικάσαι τὴν μεν Ισοκράτους ῥῆϐορικὴν τῇ πολυ κλέιτω καὶ φειδίω τέχνη, κατα τὸ σεμνὸν και μεγαλότεχνον, και αξιωματικὸν. And in his chapter on Dinarchus, where he is dilating on the advantages possessed by original writers or artists, and the impossibility of those who come after them, imitating their life, and spirit, and real beauties, he adds (speaking of Phidias, and other great masters), ὅτι πᾶσι μὲν τοῖς ἀρχετύποις, ἀὐλοφυὴς τις ἐπιπρέπει χάρις, και ὥρα.

* Essai sur l'Art Statuaire.

Quintilian, with more critical acumen, distinguishes, by strong lines, the different merits of Phidias and Polycletus. Lib. xii. c. 10. " Diligentia " ac decor Polycleti suprà ceteros, cui quanquam à " plerisque tribuitur palma, tamen, ne nihil detra- " hatur, deesse pondus putant. Nam ut humanæ " formæ decorem addiderit suprà verum, ita non " explevisse Deorum auctoritatem videtur. Quin " ætatem quoque graviorem dicitur refugisse, nihil " ausus ultra leves genas. At quæ Polycleto* defue- " runt, Phidiæ atquæ Alcameni dantur. Phidias " tamen diis quam hominibus efficiendis melior arti- " fex traditur, in Ebore vero longè citrà æmulum, " vel si nihil, nisi Minervam Athenis, aut Olympium " in Elide Jovem fecisset: cujus pulchritudo adje- " cisse aliquid recepta religioni videtur, adeò ma- " jestas operis Deum æquavit."

* Quintilian must be here supposed to compare the different excellencies of Polycletus, Alcamenes, and Phidias, with respect to their works in marble, as Alcamenes only worked in that material. The same may be said of Ep. xiii. and vi. of Martial:

" Quis te Phidiaco formatam, Julia, cœlo
Velquis Palladiæ non putet artis opus?
Candida non tacitâ respondet imagine Lygdos†
Et placido fulget vivus in ore decor."

† Lygdos was a part of Mount Taurus, famous for its white marble.

But words were inadequate to express with sufficient energy the admiration which the ancients felt for the style and character of the works of this celebrated artist. They compared them to the style of Thucydides and of Demosthenes. Yet the masculine beauty pourtrayed by the hand of Phidias was combined with sweetness, with elegance, and with grace. Equally ingenious as he was sublime, he executed great works with energy; those the more inferior, with simplicity and truth.

> " Artis Phidiacæ toreuma clarum
> " Pisces adspicis: adde aquam natabunt."

His style, which varied with his subject, was at the same time grand and refined.* If Phidias had not applied all his powers to pourtray the slightest shades, and the most delicate lines, he never would have reached that expression of *life*, peculiarly his own. His style was truly admirable, because it " united the three characters of truth, grandeur, and minute refinement."

Plutarch, in his Life of Pericles, tells us, that that munificent and enlightened patron of the arts appointed Phidias the sole director of all his public works. All the other artists, however eminent,

* Ἐχθσὰ τι καὶ μεγαλεῖον καὶ ἀκριβὲς ἅμα.—Demet. Plant. de Elevent. cap. 14.

received his orders. Of these, Callicrates and Ictinus were particularly employed upon the Parthenon.

The two distinguished men above mentioned, who seemed to live for each other's glory, and to combine their joint exertions in order to embellish Athens, were frequently the objects of jealousy to the Athenian people; and Phidias fell a victim to their animosity, for attempting to give to his own name the immortality which it was not doubted would be the inheritance of his works.

Plutarch, in speaking of their works, describes them in the following terms:

After observing, in general, that those which were slowly executed were likely to be the most durable, he adds—"Hence we have the more reason to "wonder, that the structures raised by Pericles "should be built so quickly, and yet built for "ages; for as each of them, when finished, had the "venerable air of antiquity, so, even now, they "retain the strength and freshness of a modern "building. A bloom is diffused over them, which "preserves their aspect untarnished by time, as if "they were animated with a spirit of perpetual "youth, and unfading elegance."

Pausanias, a cotemporary of Plutarch, says very little on the subject of the Temple of Minerva at Athens. He merely remarks, that on the western

façade was represented the Birth of Minerva; and on that to the east, the Contest between Minerva and Neptune for naming the city. After describing the statue of the Goddess, which was of ivory and gold, he adds*—"The only statue of a man which "I saw here [ἐνταῦθα] was one of Hadrian."†

A few words may be necessary, upon the subject of the sculptures on the exterior of the Parthenon.

The practice had obtained among the sculptors and architects of Greece, in a very early period of the art, of introducing groups of statues to occupy the ἀέτιον, or triangular space above the porticoes of the temples.

The description in Diodorus Siculus of the sculptures on the pediment of the Temple of Jupiter at Agrigentum, representing at one extremity the Battle of the Giants, and at the other the Taking of Troy—the Twelve Labours of Hercules,

* "Τρίν δὲ ἢ γενέσθαι πανδώραν, ἔκ ἦν πῶ γοναικῶν γένος—ἐνταῦθα εἰκόνα ἰδῶν εἶδα Ἀδριανὲ βασιλέως μόνε."

To this passage it may probably be attributed, that some modern travellers, who had no means of viewing the statues but from the ground, and, of course, from a considerable distance, have imagined that two of them, on the western pediment, were whiter and fresher than the rest, and bore a resemblance to Hadrian and Sabina.

† Vide Pausan. in Att.

on the fronton of the Temple of Hercules at Thebes, by the hand of Praxiteles—the Calydonian Boar Hunt, described with so much detail in the 8th book of Pausanias on the Temple of Minerva Alea at Tegæa—those in honour of Bacchus and Apollo on the two frontons of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, by the hands of Praxias, the pupil of Calarnis, and Androsthenes, the pupil of Eucadmus, both of them Athenian artists;—but, above all, the magnificent Temple of Jupiter at Olympia.—All these instances present a strong body of evidence, that a building, of the character of the Temple of Minerva at Athens, would not have been left by Pericles with a bare pediment: and, if Phidias did place any sculptures upon them, it can hardly be doubted that they were amongst the most distinguished works of that artist, and of his pupils.

No subjects of ancient fable are more frequently alluded to in the poets and historians of Greece and Rome, than the contest between Minerva and Neptune; the birth of the former; and the battle of the Centaurs and Lapithæ. One instance of this nature, bearing an immediate allusion to the present subject, may be adduced from the 6th book of Ovid's Metamorphoses. The poet is relating the contest between Minerva and Arachne for the honours of the loom. The Goddess is appropriately described as tracing upon her tapestry her former contest with Neptune

for the honour of naming the capital of Greece. The poet's words are so strikingly descriptive of the sculptures on one of the pediments of the Parthenon, that the reader will readily pardon their being quoted at length.

" Cecropiâ Pallas Scopulum Mavortis in arce
Pingit, et antiquam terræ de nomine litem.
Bis sex cœlestes, medio Jove, sedibus altis
Augustâ gravitate sedent, sua quemque Deorum
Inscribit facies: Jovis est regalis imago.
Stare Deum pelagi, longoque ferire tridente
Aspera saxa facit, Medioque, e vulnere saxi
Exsiluisse ferum; quo pignore vindicet urbem.
At sibi dat clypeum, dat acutæ cuspidis hastam,
Dat galeam capiti; defenditur ægide pectus;
Percussamque suâ simulat de cuspide terram
Prodere cum baccis fœtum canentis Olivæ;
Mirarique Deos; operi victoria finis."*

A more elegant compliment to the genius and arts of Athens can scarcely be imagined, than is contained in these lines.

The subject of the tapestry is the same with that upon the temple.

The Goddess herself is represented producing, as the utmost effort of an imitative art, the same

* Ovid. Met. lib. vi. Fab. 1.

picture which already adorned her own temple in her own city.

The twelve Deities seated, with Jupiter in the midst, exactly correspond with the remains which have been preserved. Neptune produces the horse, and Minerva the olive tree:* and the Arx Cecropia seems to fix, beyond a doubt, the spot to which the poet attaches the scenes which he describes.

An objection might possibly be started, that "Scopulum Mavortis" would allude to the Areopagus; but it does not readily appear that the Areopagus was ever so called: whereas, on a reference to Pausanias, one is struck with the peculiar propriety of applying, in the present instance, this denomination to the ground on which the Temple of Minerva stands.

Pausanias begins the fifth chapter of his Attics with a description of the Tholus or Prytaneum, which was to the east and north of the Acropolis. He then mentions the statues of several heroes who gave their names to the Athenian tribes. He enters into details of the history of Athens under Pandion,

* Traces of the accessory ornaments, alluded to by the poet, are to be found in several of the mutilated statues on the pediments: but, as they were of bronze, or some more precious material, they have long since disappeared, as well as those of which some remains are still to be discovered on the metopes, and on the frize of the cell.

and during the reigns of Ptolemy, Antigonus, and Attalus. Returning to the statues, he enumerates, among others, that of Demosthenes, and close to it *a Temple dedicated to Mars.* He then describes several other statues; and at length arrives at the Theatre of Bacchus and Odeon. This statement would seem to fix the Temple of Mars in some spot under the craggy cliffs which terminate the Acropolis to the east, (*i. e.* in the line of the street of the Tripods;) and gives a rational ground for supposing, that those cliffs were the Scopulum Mavortis of the poet.— Now the eastern façade of the Parthenon appears to rise immediately above these craggy cliffs, and certainly presents to the spectator below one of the grandest scenes which can be imagined, even in Greece.

APPENDIX [C].

DESCRIPTION

D'UN

BAS-RELIEF DU PARTHÉNON,

ACTUELLEMENT AU

MUSÉE NAPOLÉON.

Par A. L. Millin, *Conservateur des Médailles, des Pierres gravées, et des Antiques de la Bibliotheque Nationale de France: Professeur d'Histoire et d'Antiquités.*

Le magnifique bas-relief dont je vais donner la description, est déjà très-connu, quoiqu'il n'ait jamais été gravé. Il ornoit la frise extérieure qui régnoit autour de la *cella* du Temple de Minerve à Athènes. Il en a été détaché par M. de Choiseul-Gouffier, que sa noble passion pour les arts a autant illustré que ses qualités éminentes, sa grande fortune, et ses ambassades. Il est actuellement au

J.C. Hood sculp.

Musée Napoléon ; et on l'appelle en général, parmi les artistes, *le bas-relief d'Athènes.*

Ce beau monument est en marbre pentélique. On y distingue huit personnages, deux hommes et six femmes, partagés en trois groupes. Cette frise représentoit la pompe ou procession des Panathénées. Cette portion de ce grand bas-relief nous offre le moment où la pompe de cette grande fête va s'arranger. Les jeunes filles reçoivent des mains des directeurs de la cérémonie les vases et les ustensiles qu'elles doivent porter.

Les Panathénées, ainsi que leur nom l'indique, étoient des fêtes établies en mémoire de la réunion de tous les peuples de l'Attique dans la ville d'Athènes. Celles-ci étoient les petites Panathénées, qui se célébroient tous les ans le 14 du mois hécatombéon, et qui avoient été instituées par Thésée, en mémoire de cette réunion. Les grandes Panathénées se célébroient dans la troisième année de chaque olympiade, le 27 du mois hécatombéon.

Les grandes Panathénées étoient celles qui se célébroient avec le plus de pompe et d'éclat. Il est probable que ce sont celles dont la superbe frise du Parthénon nous offre la représentation. On y faisoit des courses de chevaux ; on y disputoit le prix de la lutte et des différens exercices du corps, celui de la flûte et de la cithare ; on y chantoit les éloges d'Harmodius, d'Aristogiton, et de Thrasybule, libé-

rateurs de leur patrie. La pompe ou procession étoit une des principales parties de cette fête ; elle étoit accompagnée de plusieurs classes de citoyens. J'en décrirai les détails lorsque je publierai toute la frise de la *cella* du Parthénon ; je ne dois m'attacher ici qu'à ceux que nous offre notre bas-relief.

Il est, comme je l'ai dit, partagé en plusieurs groupes. Le premier nous fait voir un vieillard qui présente un vase à deux jeunes filles placées sur la même ligne, et dont l'attitude sévère et décente annonce le respect religieux avec lequel elles remplissent leurs fonctions. Xénophon nous apprend en effet, que, dans cette fête, il y avoit des vieillards dont la figure étoit vénérable, et des filles des meilleures maisons d'Athènes, dont les traits, la taille, et la demarche, attiroient tous les regards. Le vieillard présente un vase aux deux jeunes filles ; et malgré le peu de capacité de ce vase, il le soutient des deux mains ; ce qui annonce qu'il est rempli de lait ou d'huile, dont on faisoit des libations. Quatre trous faits sur ce vase étoient destinés sans doute à y fixer des ornemens de bronze, peut-être dorés. Les jeunes filles écoutent avec recueillement ses instructions.

Dans le second groupe, un vieillard vêtu comme le précédent semble régler la marche : il a le bras gauche élevé à la hauteur de la ceinture ; tous ses doigts sont fermés, à l'exception de l'index, avec

lequel il a l'air de leur prescrire quelque chose. Les deux trous placés au-dessus et au-dessous de sa main droite étoient probablement destinés à fixer un sceptre ou un bâton qu'il tenoit. Les deux jeunes filles sont à-peu-près dans la même attitude que les premières ; ce qui convient à la gravité et à l'ensemble d'une marche. Derrière elles sont deux autres jeunes filles, qui se suivent : celle qui vient immédiatement après les deux précédentes, porte dans la main droite une patère.

Les vieillards sont vêtus de cet ample manteau appelé par les Grecs *himation*, et chez les Romains *pallium*, dont sont ordinairement vêtus tous les personnages qui doivent avoir un maintien grave et imposant, tels que Jupiter, Sérapis, Æsculape, Silène, les philosophes et les magistrats. Les jeunes filles ont de longues tuniques Ioniennes sans manches, et un ample *peplus*.

Ce bas-relief est précieux pour la beauté des draperies. Il est curieux de les comparer avec celles des temps précédens : on y voit par quels degrés les artistes Grecs sont parvenus à devenir les maîtres de toutes les nations pour l'invention et le jet des draperies ; ce qui est d'autant plus étonnant, qu'ils représentoient plusieurs dieux et les héros nus ou presque nus. Mais c'est la connoissance parfaite du nu qui les a conduits à cette supériorité dans l'exécution des draperies, parce qu'elles sont faites

pour couvrir le nu, mais non pas pour le cacher entièrement; il doit se faire sentir à travers les vetêmens. Les figures singulièrement habillées du vase de M. Hope, les unes comme dans un sac, les autres de tuniques et de *peplus* sans aucun pli, nous ont fait voir comment les premiers artistes exécutèrent les draperies, sans leur donner aucun mouvement; ceux qui imaginèrent de figurer les plis que font faire aux draperies la situation des membres, les mouvemens du corps, l'effet de la course et du vent, les représentèrent d'abord longs, ondulés, uniformes, et enfin avec une rudesse qu'on a regardée d'abord comme particulière au style Etrusque, mais qui, comme on le sait aujourd'hui, est le caractère de l'ancien style Grec : on en trouve des exemples dans les bas-reliefs du musée Capitolin et de la villa Albani. Ce magnifique bas-relief nous fait voir comment les Grecs ont abandonné cette manière trop dure, et ont porté l'art des draperies à sa perfection, ainsi qu'on le remarque sur plusieurs vases peints, et sur les monumens de la sculpture Grecque. Personne ensuite n'a surpassé les Grecs dans l'art des draperies : ils ont excellé principalement dans celles des femmes; mais ce beau bas-relief prouve qu'ils ne drapoient pas moins habilement les figures d'hommes. Les Romains ornoient leurs figures de draperies assez belles, mais trop amples et trop lourdes, et qui étoient bien loin de réunir la grâce

et la noblesse des draperies Grecques. Cela venoit probablement de ce que les Romains avoient moins d'occasions d'étudier le nu ; ce qui prouve combien la connoissance du nu est nécessaire pour la parfaite execution des draperies. L'art des draperies avoit disparu avec le goût des arts ; les vêtemens lourds des princes de l'empire Grec étoient sans grâce et sans mouvement. Raphaël découvrit dans les bas-reliefs, dans les pierres gravées, et les divers monumens de l'antiquité, le grand goût du jet des draperies, et ne tarda pas à l'introduire ; il est resté le premier maître dans l'art de jeter les draperies et de donner aux plis le plus bel arrangement.

Ce bas-relief est encore précieux par la sévérité du style, et par son utilité dans l'histoire des arts. C'est Phidias lui-même qui doit en avoir fourni le dessin et surveillé l'exécution.

Avant que ce marbre précieux eût été nettoyé, il conservoit des traces, non-seulement de la couleur encaustique dont, suivant l'usage des Grecs, on enduisoit la sculpture, mais encore d'une véritable peinture dont quelques parties étoient couvertes ; usage qui tient aux procédés de l'enfance de l'art, dont il ne s'étoit pas encore débarrassé. Le fond étoit bleu ; les cheveux et quelques parties du corps étoient dorés.

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